



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

Hollings Marine Laboratory
331 Fort Johnson Road
Charleston, South Carolina 29412

November 23, 2005

Craig Downs
Haereticus Environmental Laboratory
P.O. Box 92
Clifford, Virginia 24533 U.S.A.

Dear Craig:

You are cordially invited to participate in the Coral Disease and Health Consortium's (CDHC) workshop, *Developing a Framework for an Environmental Forensics Investigation in Coral Reefs*. The CDHC was created in response to the Coral Reef Taskforce's *National Action Plan* with the express purpose of organizing and coordinating scientific resources to focus specifically on coral health issues. The effect of abiotic factors on reef health and vitality is an area of major concern. Our goal is to begin developing the framework for conducting an environmental forensics investigation related to coral reef damage events. The workshop will be held January 25-28, 2006 in Key Largo, FL.

Environmental forensics provides the basis of fact related to natural resource damage for mitigation, negotiation, mediation, or litigation. The elements in an environmental forensics investigation include: 1) establishing a damaging event has occurred; 2) investigating the damage as to causation; and 3) providing technical evidence to those responsible for building the legal arguments. The development of this framework and the future development of detailed guidance will be designed to provide the types of knowledge and technologies that can fulfill the requirements that resource managers have to: 1) demonstrate and determine the extent of resource injury/condition; 2) link causal factors to the injured resource; and 3) provide a cohesive set of methods and tools to routinely and consistently evaluate effectiveness of the management response and thus, enhance resource protection.

The workshop will be a working meeting involving a limited number of nationally and internationally recognized experts representing environmental assessment, resource managers, forensic investigators and litigators. Workshop participants will be assigned to groups charged with identifying key elements necessary to conduct an investigation and provide recommendations for drafting a government guideline document for conducting an Environmental Forensic Investigation (EFI) of coral reefs. The workshop will not be a forum for presentations nor discussion of policy issues.

The workshop will be held at Amy Slate's Amora Dive Resort in Key Largo, FL. John Cooksey (Worldaqua@aol.com) will be the coordinator for this workshop and will arrange travel and accommodations. Travel and per diem costs will be covered by the workshop. We would appreciate confirmation of your participation by December 15, 2005.

On behalf of the Coral Disease and Health Consortium Planning Committee, I hope you will be able to join us in helping make a difference for coral reefs worldwide.

Sincerely,

Cheryl M. Woodley, Ph.D.
Chair, CDHC Environmental Forensics Workshop Committee

